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INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 000660

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/BSC MDASCHBACH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2033
TAGS: PREL PGOV KDEM ASEC BL PA

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED ON AMBASSADORS IN BOLIVIA AND VENEZUELA

REF: 99473

Classified By: DCM Michael J. Fitzpatrick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(C) DCM delivered the essence of talking points in reftel demarche September 14 to President Lugo's chief of staff, Miguel Lopez Perito, at Lopez Perito' request prior to Lugo's departure for the UNASUR Summit in Chile. DCM told Lopez Perito that the charges leveled against our ambassadors were false, and that the Bolivian and Venezuelan leaders know this; that the USG responded reluctantly but firmly by expelling their ambassadors to the U.S. based on reciprocity; that the USG has avoided negative rhetoric in our diplomatic engagement with Bolivia and Venezuela; and that we are focused on promoting a positive agenda for the hemisphere. He read Lopez Perito several key passages of Department statements issued in recent days. DCM told Lopez Perito that antagonizing one's neighbors does not improve the well-being of a country's citizens, and that pragmatic governments work quietly to implement change. Lopez Perito was very appreciative, and told DCM he would immediately share the USG's position on this matter with President Lugo -- who had instructed Lopez Perito to confirm the U.S. position before he traveled to the Summit.

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